

The spice box “Crocuses in the snow”

By Sharon Robertson, Lt. Colonel

The cold, blustery night had given way to a lemonade sky, pale sunlight filtered through a veil of high clouds. Hard, icy patches of snow remained in sheltered areas, defying the challenge of the sun’s probing rays.

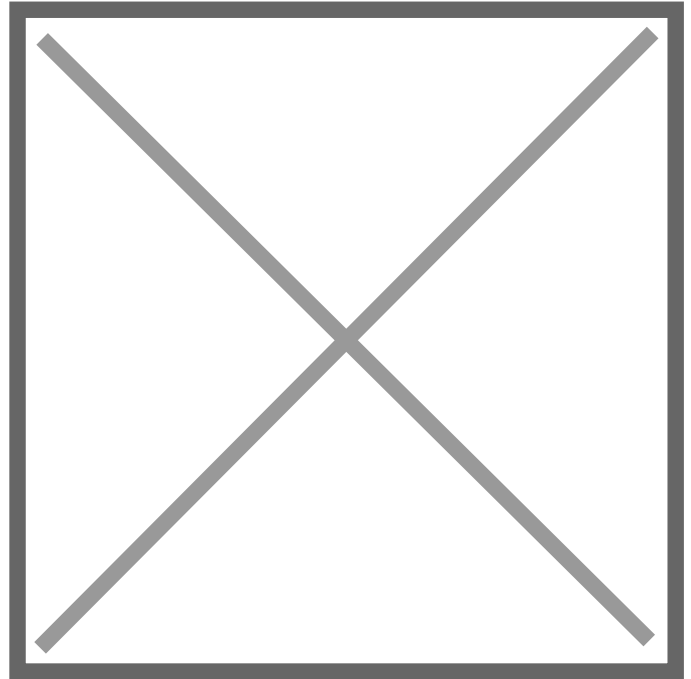
I shivered. From inside the house the hint of sunshine had been deceptive; it had looked like spring, but once I stood in the cold yard, winter seemed determined to go on forever. I wandered aimlessly, using a stick to poke at the detritus left by ravaging winter winds.

That’s when I saw it, one of God’s lovely reminders—a clump of crocuses blooming in the snow, their fragile beauty seeming unbelievable, unnatural in the snow-covered bed. They were, of course, totally natural; they were thriving there as God designed them to thrive, bits of beauty blooming in a hostile environment. They were his reminder of wonderful things to come, of hope for a hostile world.

I am convinced that the Creator has an appreciation for his creation; when he looked upon it, he found it very good. He was pleased, and though the disobedience of mankind caused damage, I cannot believe that God has lost his sense of appreciation for the beauty of what he designed and molded. He delights in those things that remind mankind of his promises of hope for the future; he delights in the idea of crocuses in the snow.

God is well aware that when surrounded by the most depressing of winter weather, the most punishing storms, the most discouraging outlook for the future, human beings are prone to depression, to the urge to allow themselves to be overwhelmed by surrounding forces. He is aware of the enervating temptation to give up hope.

The lovely little crocus that blooms in a hostile environment is a reminder that spring is coming, that good things are on the way. Such reminders coming to us are no more an accident of nature than was the rainbow God placed in the sky to remind Noah of his providential care. God wants all people to know, to be certain in their deepest being, of the inevitability of the victory, the life, the eternal joy and peace that is found through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The storm will pass; spring is coming.



Pursuant to that plan, God has created us, his people, to be like crocuses in the snow.

The thing about the crocus: it blooms, not because it is striving to make the world a brighter place, but because its nature is to bloom. That's what crocuses do. We look at it, and marvel, and are encouraged, not because it is bravely trying to hide its distress, but because it is doing what it was designed to do—bloom in what is normally considered a hostile environment.

Even for the Christian, life has its discouraging moments—hours—days. We live in a world that appears to be struggling for survival. We listen to news reports that are rarely encouraging, and watch television programs and listen to music that remind us that Satan is seeking control of our hearts and minds. Hunger and suffering are rampant; we try to help, and wish we could do more, but feel so helpless! For the aging, strength and energy seem to be failing, making the simplest task a chore and a challenge.

We live in a hostile environment—sometimes we wish we could imitate the proverbial ostrich and bury our head in the sand. That, however, is contrary to nature. Don't even think of it! God depends on us to exemplify the joy and confidence that is the natural product of our faith, *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do* (Eph. 2:10 NIV).

God expects us to offer to others the hope he has given us. He needs us to function in accordance with the nature he has created within us. He depends on us to serve “as crocuses in the snow,” reminding a needy, discouraged world that there is more to life—that there is hope, that his plans for us are (as my grandmother used to say) a “settle-fact,” a thing settled once and for all, a thing that cannot be doubted.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:11-13).

But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations (Ps. 33:11).

Like the crocus, God designed the Christian to thrive, a blossom of reassuring encouragement in a hostile environment. He planned for us to be his reminder of wonderful things to come, of hope for a hostile world.